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NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

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Summary of Conclusions for
Meeting of the NSC Principals Committee

DATE: September 5, 1995

LOCATION: White House Situation Room

TIME: 2:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.

SUBJECT: Summary of Conclusions of Principals Committee Meeting
on Bosnia (S)

PARTICIPANTS:

CHAIR

Anthony Lake

CIA

John Deutch

Dennis Blair

OVP

Leon Fuerth

JCS

John Shalikashvili

William Owens

Michael Byron

STATE

Strobe Talbott

Peter Tarnoff

John Kornblum

White House

Sandy Berger

Nancy Soderberg

DEFENSE

John White

Walter Slocombe

Jan Lodai

NSC

Alexander Vershbow

Bill Danvers

USUN

Rick Inderfurth

David Scheffer

OMB

Alice Rivlin

Gordon Adams

Summary of Conclusions

1. Principals met to review the status of the NATO airstrikes in response to the August 27 Bosnian Serb attack on the Sarajevo marketplace, progress of the U.S. diplomatic initiative, and the recommendations of the Deputies Committee on implementation of a Bosnia peace settlement. They agreed to meet again on Monday, September 11 with the Holbrooke delegation in order to review next steps on the diplomatic front. (S)

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NATO Air Strikes

2. Principals agreed that we will support the continuation of NATO airstrikes, as agreed by the UN and NATO Commanders, as long as the Bosnian Serbs have failed to comply with the UN/NATO conditions. This does not rule out tactical pauses in the operation. Principals noted that a decision to move from option 2 to option 3 targeting will require a new NAC decision and further coordination with the United Nations; we will await a recommendation to this effect on the part of the UN and NATO commanders. Principals also agreed that if the Bosnian Serbs retaliate, we will support further escalation by NATO. (S)

3. In order to encourage Bosnian Serb compliance with the UN/NATO conditions, Principals agreed that we will continue to stress the need for restraint on the part of Bosnian government forces. We will convey to the Bosnian Serbs through Milosevic and General Janvier that we are making clear to the Bosnian government that we expect that they will not take advantage of the situation.

U.S. Diplomatic Initiative

4. Principals discussed the progress of the Holbrooke mission and its negotiations with the Bosnians, Croats, and Serbian President Milosevic. The Friday meeting of the three Balkan Foreign Ministers in Geneva with the Contact Group will likely produce agreement on general principles for a political settlement and FRY recognition of Bosnia. Representation will be at the political director level on the Contact Group side, along with EU negotiator Bildt. It was agreed that State would consult with Ambassador Holbrooke regarding the possible inclusion as observers of Italy, Canada, Spain and Turkey. (It was subsequently agreed that these countries would not be included in the Geneva meeting, but that they would be invited to an expanded Contact Group meeting the following week.) (S)

5. Principals agreed that we would not provide any further sanctions relief for the FRY in return for interim steps such as mutual recognition. Principals agreed, however, that we might provide humanitarian assistance to Serbia to support refugees from the Krajina in response to FRY recognition of Bosnia, but that we would not hold out this possibility in advance of the Geneva meeting, and that we would also insist on Bosnian Serb compliance with the UN/NATO conditions in addition to FRY recognition of Bosnia. (S)

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6. Principals approved the approach to sanctions relief outlined in the Deputies Committee's Memorandum for Principals of September 1. OVP noted that we still needed to define what would constitute full implementation of a settlement, which would be the stage at which a full lifting of sanctions would occur, and undertook to product a paper looking at the options for when to lift sanctions (Action: OVP). Principals also noted the importance of maintaining the outer wall of sanctions contingent upon Serbian cooperation with the international War Crimes Tribunal. (S)

Implementation of a Peace Settlement

7. Principals approved the concept for military implementation of peace plan as set forth in the OSD paper. They agreed that the interagency working group would coordinate on a proposed draft NAC decision sheet that could form the basis for tasking to the NATO military authorities. They noted that initial consultations would begin the following day with key allies, to be followed by discussions with all allies in Brussels. (S)

8. Principals agreed that the exit strategy summarized in the Deputies Committee Memorandum should be clarified to state that the peace implementation force (IFOR) will withdraw when the Bosnian Federation is capable of defending itself, but in any case no later than 12 months from its initial deployment. Principals agreed on the urgency of developing a U.S. position on the political framework for implementation of a settlement and requested that Deputies discuss this on a priority basis. (Action: State to circulate paper for Deputies discussion). (S)

9. Principals agreed on the importance of early engagement with the Russians on peace plan implementation, noting reports that in Chancellor Kohl's meetings with Yeltsin, the Russians had objected to NATO being in charge of the operation. They agreed that the Deputies should urgently review the modalities of a NATO-plus operation as a basis for engaging with the Russians. (Action: OSD to circulate paper for Deputies discussion.) (S)

Equipping and Training for Federation Forces

10. Principals reviewed the concept for equipping and training Federation armed forces in the context of a peace settlement, as set forth in the JCS paper. While they concurred in the recommendation that the U.S. take the lead in coordinating a multinational effort to equip and train Federation forces, they agreed that it may be preferable for the U.S. to play a more modest role in the actual equip/train effort, providing a small level of military assistance and training while leaving other states to provide the bulk of Bosnian needs. Principals agreed we should continue to seek to exclude radical states like Iran

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from equipping and training the Bosnians by making our own support conditional on such exclusion. (S)

11. Principals recognized that the equip and train concept will be especially controversial with allies and the Russians, and agreed that further work on arms control options should be accelerated with a view to avoiding a regional arms race, recognizing that such measures may be difficult to negotiate among the parties (Action: State to circulate paper for Deputies discussion). (S)

12. Principals agreed that there were many other issues that could affect our approach to the equip/train issue, and agreed that an interagency task force chaired by the Department of State should be established to address such issues as procurement, recruitment of donors, and modalities of lifting the arms embargo. They also agreed that consultations with key allies should begin through Defense Ministry channels, in coordination with the State-led task force. Principals agreed in principle that an assessment team could make a low-key informal visit to Sarajevo to consult on Federation requirements. They noted that there were potential legal problems involved in an equip/train effort, giving that our assistance would likely go to the Federation rather than to the central government of the future Bosnian union. (Actions: To be determined after follow-up discussion by Deputies). (S)

Economic Recommendation

13. Principals briefly reviewed the progress of ongoing consultations with the European Union on post-war economic reconstruction. They agreed on the need for an expanded State concept paper following the return of the U.S. delegation from Europe (Action: State). (S)

Congressional Consultations/Funding

14. Principals agreed on immediate Congressional consultations on Bosnia, encompassing NATO airstrikes, the U.S. diplomatic initiative and U.S. planning for implementation of a peace settlement. They endorsed a briefing of the full Senate the following day by a senior interagency team, to be followed by similar briefings for House committees on September 7. They also agreed that, in light of expected Congressional questions about funding for various peace implementation efforts, options should be developed for financing peace plan implementation, equipping and training Federation forces, and U.S. contribution to post-war economic reconstruction for the Balkans (Action: OMB). (S)

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